

Full of Fire by nerdsarehot75

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: F/M, Fluff

Language: English

Characters: Jim "Chief" Hopper, Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Lonnie Byers, Will Byers

Relationships: Joyce Byers/Jim "Chief" Hopper

Status: Completed

Published: 2016-09-12

Updated: 2016-09-12

Packaged: 2022-04-01 20:35:05

Rating: Teen And Up Audiences

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 1

Words: 1,880

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

Hopper makes some self discoveries, Lonnie comes back around and Joyce is a total bamf.

Full of Fire

Hopper had noticed the difference. He was pretty sure the whole town had noticed the difference. Joyce was much better. Now that Will was home from the hospital and the house had been cleaned up it was as if the light had come back into her life.

It was the small things Hop liked. When she smiled she lit up. She was breathtaking and he was sure she didn't know it. Her eyes sparkled and her nose scrunched up and her laugh was like music. He'd happily listen to it on repeat for the rest of his life.

Her hair was in some kind of order and he thought she'd begun wearing makeup again. She was also sleeping again which must help. Her skin glowed and he was desperate to reach out and touch it. He thought it might be soft and smooth under his touch.

He could remember her from their days in high school. She'd been so bright and forceful. Seeing her when he'd come back had been a shock. She looked so defeated, as if the world was weighing down on her shoulders. She'd married that dickhead Lonnie, of course. It looked like all the happiness and goodness had been sucked from her, leaving a husk of the girl he'd known.

In their mad dash to find Will he'd seen the spark growing in her again, mainly when she was angry at him. Somewhere within her she hadn't given up and was fighting. She may have been severely sleep deprived and dirty but she was there.

The first time he'd seen her afterwards he'd gone to the house to see Will. He'd been home a few days and he didn't think he was able to avoid it any longer. She'd opened the door, mid laugh, her smile wide. He'd stopped breathing, caught in the warmth in her eyes. She'd ushered him in, talking almost non stop, a stark contrast to when he'd last seen her.

He'd kept coming back after that night like a moth to a flame. She was the sun he revolved around and the stars he looked towards to guide his way.

It was on one of the instances when Hopper popped by unannounced that it really hammered home how far gone he was. He had raised his hand to knock when the door opened and Joyce's startled face was looking at him. He froze, his arm still raised.

"Oh, Hop, what are you doing here?" she asked.

He blinked. She was wearing a dress he'd never seen before and her

hair was actually styled. Her eyes were lined with black and her lips were painted pink. She looked down at herself, smoothing the fabric under a shaking hand.

"I heard the car and thought you were Lonnie," she explained. His heart started again.

"Lonnie?" he asked.

"He's coming round to see the boys. I thought this would show him I'm much better off without him." She gestured to her body. His eyes swept over her again before very purposefully looking her in the eye.

"Or, he'll think this is you dressing up for him to impress him," he replied. A quiet anger was simmering under the surface. She was the one who blinked this time.

"You think so?" she asked. "I hadn't thought about it like that."

He nodded. She turned away to reenter the house and he shot a hand out to grasp her elbow. She turned back to him, a frantic energy in her eyes.

"You look beautiful," he said. She smiled at him, the energy calming down.

He followed her back into the house, surreptitiously watching the sway of her hips. He waved a greeting at Will and Jonathan on the couch. She put on coffee, getting out two mugs. He watched her moving around the kitchen, more frenetic energy coursing through her body. He could feel himself smiling but couldn't stop. He was glad she wasn't looking at him.

They both turned at the sound of a car pulling up outside. Joyce made to move past him, but he put an arm out to stop her, waiting for the knock at the door. It never came.

"Joyce, babe," Lonnie's voice called through the house.

He stopped to talk to the boys in the living room but left quickly to wander into the kitchen. He stopped when he saw Hopper sitting there.

"Hopper, didn't realise you'd be here," Lonnie said. He looked at Joyce. "Thought it would just be the family, like old times."

"Hopper is family," Joyce shot back. Lonnie levelled a glare at him but he just stared back.

The boys entered the room then, both more sombre than when Hopper had entered. They took seats at the table, leaving their parents the only ones standing. The water had boiled. Hopper stood up to finish making the coffee. He brushed his hand across the small of Joyce's back, moving her forward so he could pass.

He handed the mug to her, their fingers brushing and she smiled at him in thanks. They sat down at the table, leaving Lonnie on his own, the outsider in the house. They were all watching him expectantly, "Well, babe, you ready to go then?" he asked.

"Go?" Joyce replied.

"I thought we could go out. There's a baseball game nearby. I got tickets." He produced them from his pocket, waving them like they were even remotely tempting to the family.

"I'm not sure that's a good idea," Hopper said. Lonnie glared at him again.

"I thought we'd be staying here," Joyce said. Lonnie looked at each of the people at the table. Jonathan was staring defiantly back, his face set in a frown. Will was watching his mother, as was Hopper.

"Come on, boys, it'll be fun. They'll be fine, babe," Lonnie tried.

"I'd rather stay here," Will said.

"Me too," Jonathan agreed.

"I think that settles that," Hopper said, standing up to clean his empty mug. Lonnie took his seat at the table. He took Joyce's hand, giving her an imploring look. Hopper came to stand behind Joyce, his hands resting on her shoulders. She looked up at him and he squeezed her shoulders.

"Maybe you should just leave," Joyce suggested.

"Joyce, babe, come on. I'm here to spend time with my family," he said. She took her hand from under his, choosing to grasp at Hopper's instead.

"And what are you really here for this time? To sell our story to the highest bidder?" she asked, not able to keep the venom out of her voice.

"Can't a man want to spend time with his family?" he deflected.

"You never have before," Jonathan said. Lonnie looked between the four of them, each face set.

"It'll be fun," he said, looking towards Will. The boy shifted in his seat, looking at his mom. She smiled encouragingly at him and he shook his head.

"I really think you'd better leave," Hopper said to Lonnie, the threat not even slightly veiled.

"Joyce," he said, his voice more commanding than pleading.

"You know where the door is," was all she said in reply.

He watched her for a few minutes more before saying, "I'll call you, babe."

He turned tail and left the house, the door slamming behind him. Joyce let out a long breath and Hopper squeezed her shoulder. Jonathan got up and removed her cold cup of coffee. She lent back, her head resting on Hopper.

A few days later Hopper and the Byers were sitting around the table eating dinner. It had been a good day. They'd been to see the latest movie which had devolved into the boys and Joyce having a popcorn fight. They'd been asked to leave but the glint in the man's eye told them there was no hard feelings. Hopper had driven them home, glad for the full car.

A knocking started up at the door, furious and insistent. Shouting joined in as the noise became louder. Joyce got up from the table, a worried look on her face. Hopper followed her out into the hall where the shouting became more distinct. It was recognisably her name and when she opened the door Lonnie stood there, eyes bloodshot and swaying on his feet.

"What are you doing here?" she asked.

"I've come to see you, babe," he slurred, leaning against the doorframe.

Joyce pushed him on the chest and he stumbled backwards to the steps of the porch. His arms windmilled and Hopper tried to keep the laughter inside. She followed him out and poked him down the steps and Hopper followed. He could hear the boys following, Jonathan stopping them at the doorway.

"Joyce, c'mon, let me in Don't you want to see me?" Lonnie asked.

"You're drunk," she said. He stared at her, his eyes unfocused and uncomprehending. "I'm not letting you near my sons like this."

He reached out a hand for her and she recoiled. He grasped her upper arm, almost bruising her.

"Let go," she commanded.

"Just let me come in. Everything will be okay if you let me come in," he said, his voice surprisingly soothing given the amount of alcohol in his system.

"Let go of my arm," she said again, her voice low. Hopper took a step forward to intervene.

"Let me in, babe, you know you want to," he said, ignoring her as always.

With her eyes ablaze and passion moving through her body, it was then that Hopper knew he'd fallen in love with Joyce Byers. She

slapped Lonnie, the sound reverberating around them. Lonnie looked at her, shocked, and Hopper felt his breath catch in his throat and his heart skip a beat. She turned her back on her ex-husband and with determination in every step came up to Hopper, pulled him down and kissed him, long and hard. His hands wrapped around her waist and he kissed her back, unable to process what had happened. He wasn't sure he'd be able to pull away if he tried. And even if this was just to piss off Lonnie he couldn't regret his actions.

She drew away and led him back into the house, ignoring the yells from Lonnie. She locked the door behind them and ignored the renewed knocking. This was the Joyce he'd fallen for, the hero with the heart big enough to suffocate her, the woman who fought and fought and never back down, the firecracker.

Jonathan artfully ushered Will into his room, closing the door in a very final way on them. Hopper looked at Joyce, still dazed. She pulled him down for another kiss, this one soft and slow, full of unspoken words and feelings. Pulling back, she looked at him from under her eyelashes.

"You better not disappear on me, Hop," she warned, still on tip toes to keep her arms around his neck.

"I don't think I could even if I wanted to," he replied, swooping in to kiss her again.

Yes, the town had noticed the difference, but to Hopper it didn't matter. All that mattered was the woman in his arms and the kids down the hallway; the family that had welcomed him in with open arms and which he'd protect if Joyce didn't get there first.